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X
NOTES

ON

LUNATIC ASYLUMS

IN

GERMANY

AND OTHER PARTS OF EUROPE.

BY

W. F. CUMMING, M.D.,

LATE BENGAL MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENT.



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JOHN CHURCHILL, LONDON ;
MACLACHLAN AND STEWART, EDINBURGH.

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Rec. June, 21, 1899.

PRINTED BY NEILL AND COMPANY, EDINBURGH.

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NOTES
ON
LUNATIC ASYLUMS
IN
GERMANY, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

OF all the ameliorations in the condition of the human race, which the present century has witnessed, there is none on which the mind of the philanthropist will more complacently dwell, than on the great advance which has been made in the knowledge and treatment of mental disease.

Until towards the close of the last century, the unfortunate beings “stricken of God,” were considered as outcasts from the human family; their misfortune was treated as crime; and the individual in whom insanity had declared itself,

was no longer deemed worthy of the privileges of man. Even the voice of affection was stifled in his behalf; he was considered a disgrace to the hearth which he once adorned, and was straightway removed from the observation of his more fortunate fellow-men, and consigned to a mad-house, where concealment and safe custody, rather than cure, were the objects aimed at.

Nor need our wonder be much excited by such a state of matters, when we reflect on the great ignorance that formerly prevailed on the subject of insanity, and on the superstitious notions that were generally entertained respecting it;—and as impressions which have once acquired firm hold of the public mind are not easily displaced, we need not be surprised that, in spite of the great improvements of modern times, much ancient prejudice should still remain, and lunatic asylums should even yet be regarded by a large section of the public as the abodes of misery and punishment, over whose portals should be inscribed—

“Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch’entrate.”

The object of the following pages is to contri-

bute towards disabusing the public mind of these prejudices, by giving a short description of asylums as they now exist,—especially of those of Germany, which I had an opportunity of visiting during the last autumn. But for the sake of the non-professional reader I shall, in the first place, notice very briefly the state of lunatic asylums in England and on the Continent, previously to the great changes which late years have brought about.

As hinted above, the object formerly was not so much to cure the patient as to remove him from society, and to bury his existence in oblivion; for, strange as it may appear, this *one* of all God's visitations was considered to bring disgrace on the whole family of the sufferer. Nay more, it was held as a stigma to be in any way connected with the treatment or custody of the insane; and hence the "Mad Doctor," as he was termed, was viewed with dislike by his professional brethren. As a natural consequence, those who undertook the office were coarse, unfeeling men, prompted rather by the love of gain than by motives of benevolence. They were content to make a profit of their victim, whom they bound

in chains, as the cheapest and most effectual means of securing his custody.

If such were the character of principals, we need not wonder that subordinates ranked still lower in the scale of humanity. These men—*keepers* as they were called—were rude in manner, and brutal in feeling; and the obedience which they failed to command with the tongue, they were ever ready to enforce with the fist. Subject to no proper control, they ruled the wretched victims committed to their care with cruel and capricious tyranny, loading them with irons, scourging them with stripes, immuring them in dungeons, and either withholding from them their food altogether, or tossing it to them as to wild beasts.

The buildings for the reception of the insane had reference solely to their safe custody, and exhibited a total neglect of comfort, cleanliness, and ventilation.

In France, previously to the Revolution of 1789, convents were the only receptacles for the insane, and in some of these, it was a rule that each lunatic should receive ten lashes per day! Even in

England, previous to 1828, there were only twelve asylums for the fifty-two counties ; and before 1808, the whole island of Ireland possessed but *one* asylum. Jails and workhouses were the ordinary receptacles ; and the lunatic, guilty of no crime, was the associate, and too often the scoff and the butt, of the lowest criminals. Even in the Metropolitan Hospital of Bethlem, much less than a century ago, a sum of about £400 per annum was derived from exhibiting to the public the wretched inmates, who were goaded to frenzy by the keepers, for the amusement of the sight-seers.

With regard to medical or moral treatment, the former was confined to the routine method practised in some places, of bleeding and purging indiscriminately, at certain seasons of the year, generally in the spring. There was no employment of gentle means of persuasion, nor any kind of moral treatment, unless indeed the oaths and execrations, and the blows of the keepers, may be considered to come within this denomination.

It would only disgust the reader to cite particular instances of the brutal disregard of the condition

of the insane. To such as are desirous of particulars, the materials, unfortunately, are too patent and abundant. Suffice it to say, the poor lunatics were kept in the most fearful state of neglect, chained to the walls, or fastened down in their beds, frequently without clothing of any sort; and thus did they pass year after year, in cold, and filth, and wretchedness, till death, more compassionate than their fellow-men, released them from their misery.

Towards the close of last century, Providence raised up a champion for the lunatic, in the person of Pinel. This great and good Frenchman, at a time when his country was torn and distracted by the excesses and horrors of the Revolution, devoted all the energies of his enlightened mind to the interests of the insane. He had long deeply studied their condition, and had arrived at the conviction, that the severe measures of coercion under which they had hitherto groaned, were not only unwarrantable assumptions of severity on the part of man towards his fellow-men, but also direct obstacles in the way of cure.

Accordingly, availing himself of the opportunities afforded him as physician of the Bicêtre,

he determined to introduce a new and more humane system of treatment, and in a single day he struck off the chains from forty maniacs. I transcribe his own version of the memorable experiment. “ Quarante malheureux aliénés qui gémissaient sous le poids des fers depuis une suite plus ou moins longue d’années, furent mis en liberté malgré toutes les craintes manifestées par le Bureau central, et on leur permit d’errer librement dans les cours, en contenant seulement les mouvemens de leurs bras par le gilet de force : la nuit ils étaient libres dans leur loge. On doit remarquer que ce fut là le terme des accidens malheureux arrivés aux gens de service, souvent frappés ou meurtris d’une manière imprévue par les aliénés retenus aux chaînes et toujours dans un état de fureur concentrée. Un de ces aliénés avait resté trente-six ans dans ce triste état, un autre quarante-cinq ans, et cependant ils conservoient encore tous deux la liberté des mouvemens, et ils se promenoient à pas lents dans l’intérieur de l’hospice. On conserve encore la mémoire d’un de ces aliénés qui était resté dix-huit ans enchaîné au fond d’une loge obscure, et qui au

premier moment où il put contempler le soleil dans tout l'éclat de sa lumière rayonnante, s'écria dans une sorte de ravissement extatique, ' Ah ! qu'il y a long-temps que je n'ai vu une si belle chose ! ' ”

He further adds,—“ Les mêmes aliénés qui, réduits aux chaînes pendant une longue suite d'années, étaient restés dans un état constant de fureur, se promenaient ensuite tranquillement avec un simple gilet de force, et s'entretenaient avec tout le monde, tandis qu'auparavant on ne pouvait en approcher sans le plus grand danger : plus de cris tumultueux, plus de vociférations menaçantes ; leur état d'effervescence cessa par degrés ; ils sollicitaient eux-mêmes l'application du gilet de force, et tout rentra dans l'ordre.”

This experiment of Pinel was the dawn of a day of mercy for the lunatic, and its successful issue proves what might, indeed, long before have suggested itself, that the very means of restraint served only to foster and foment the violence they were intended to subdue.

But although to France is unquestionably due the honour of taking the lead in the path of

amendment, she has no longer a claim to superiority over neighbouring nations, as regards either the physical treatment or the moral management of the insane.

The foregoing extracts from Pinel's work shew that he did not venture on unrestrained liberty; yet it was a grand step in advance to substitute a linen jacket for a yoke of iron. It was reserved for England to be the first to attempt the total abolition of physical restraint; and although considerable difference of opinion still exists as to the practicability and even propriety of its entire disuse, its application in well-conducted asylums is so seldom resorted to, that it may be considered as virtually abolished.

I believe the Lunatic Asylum of Lincoln was the first to discard its use altogether.

In our time, asylums are no longer considered mere places of safe custody, but as institutions where every known and available means of cure can be most efficiently employed.

The improvements introduced within the last thirty years, are creditable, alike to the spirit of the age and to the judicious efforts of the Com-

missioners in Lunacy, to whom such power and control are given by the State, that the abuses which formerly existed can no longer be practised, at all events in a systematic and aggravated degree. At the present day England can boast of institutions for the insane, both public and private, inferior to none, and perhaps superior to any, in Europe ; and as isolation is now acknowledged to be a measure of the first importance in the successful treatment of the insane, I would earnestly urge on the relatives of every individual suffering under, or threatened with mental disease, at once to banish all idea of attempts at concealment and home treatment, to call in the aid of men who have made diseases of the mind their special study, and to be guided in the disposal of their relations entirely by their advice. I would further impress upon them that insanity is not the intractable and hopeless malady which former ignorance and prejudice allowed it to become. Nay, if taken in time and judiciously treated, it is much more curable than many purely physical maladies. Thus, 50, 60, 70, and even 90 per cent. of cures have been effected in

recent cases—the last number having been attained at the Harford Asylum in the United States. Now, let us contrast the above with some other diseases. In consumption nearly all die ; in cholera, from 50 to 70 per cent. ; and in pneumonia, 30 per cent. ; so that insanity, grievous as the affliction undoubtedly is, does not necessarily bar the gates of hope against its victims. But timely means must be adopted, as all experience shews the number of cures exactly to correspond with the longer or shorter duration of the malady previous to treatment ; and even in cases where cure cannot be obtained, a well-regulated asylum can do much to improve the condition and promote the enjoyments of its inmates.

ASYLUMS IN GERMANY, &c.

WITH these introductory observations, I now proceed to a short description of the Lunatic Asylums of Germany, as I found them in the autumn of last year. Having for a long period interested myself in the subject of insanity, and visited the asylums of many countries both in Europe and the East, I was desirous of becoming acquainted with the institutions of Germany, and of seeing if the metaphysical character of the people manifested itself in peculiar forms of derangement, or in peculiar methods of cure.

Accordingly, I began my tour at Hamburg, at which great commercial city I expected to find an asylum in keeping with the advanced views of the middle of the nineteenth century. I was disappointed, however, in this expectation. On presenting myself at the "Krankenhaus" (a large general hospital outside the town, having

a portion of the building set apart for the lunatics), and sending my card to the resident physician of the lunatic department, I was informed that I might visit some of the male, but none of the female wards, which contained respectively 214 and 302 patients. An attendant was directed to accompany me through some crowded, ill-ventilated, and badly-lighted apartments, which, I have reason to think, was the only portion that could bear inspection. Indeed, I soon afterwards learned, from various quarters, that a great proportion of the lunatics of Hamburg are in a frightfully neglected state, many of them being shut up and chained in ill-lighted cellars. I have lately seen this statement confirmed in a work written by M. Appert* (the Howard of France), who found 150 of the patients chained by the legs in dark and damp dungeons, where the noise and uproar of Pandemonium prevailed.

* A writer in Damerow's Journal (vol. vii., p. 500), tries to shew that Appert has much exaggerated the evils of the Hamburg Asylum; but he admits sufficient to prove it to be one of the worst institutions of Europe, and a disgrace to a city calling itself FREE.

A Hamburg gentleman with whom I conversed on the subject, attempted to excuse this state of matters by pleading the pecuniary difficulties of the town in consequence of the destructive fire of 1842. The civic authorities, he said, admitted and regretted the gross abuse, but were at present unable, owing to financial embarrassments, to find a remedy. I doubt, however, if any one who has seen the streets of palaces that have arisen out of the ashes of the old city, will attach much importance to this excuse.

From Hamburg I proceeded to Berlin, which I reached after nine hours of railway, through a country the most uninteresting, probably, in Europe.

Here again I was disappointed, for, strange to say, Berlin, one of the largest European cities, and with a population of 400,000 souls, does not possess an asylum at all proportioned to the wants of the inhabitants. The only accommodation for the purpose, is a portion of the great general hospital, "La Charité." Above the lunatic wards, are those of the syphilitic and cutaneous patients, —an arrangement that cannot be too severely

reprobated, as calculated to exercise a prejudicial influence over both departments.

The number of patients, including both sexes, was 170; and the numbers sleeping in one dormitory varied from three to fourteen. There were only two or three separate cells, and none of these is padded. Indeed, in no German asylum did I find a padded room, the physicians invariably affirming that they have never met with instances of patients being injured by dashing themselves against the wall.

I was unfortunate in not seeing Dr Ideler, the physician-in-chief, who was absent in the provinces; but I was accompanied through the wards by an intelligent "Interne," who had been two years in the hospital.

The enlightened views of Dr Conolly on non-restraint, have not been adopted by Dr Ideler. In one room I saw a very pretty and interesting looking girl, who was labouring under religious mania, and occasionally violent, chained by the ankle to her bed; and throughout the wards there were at least ten persons subjected to various degrees of restraint, some walking about in

strait jackets, others strapped to fixed chairs, and one bound down on bed.

As might have been expected from these details, the moral treatment of the patients is extremely defective, and there is an almost total want of those means of cure which act so beneficially by bringing into action the muscular and nervous energies of the insane. There are no fields to cultivate — no gardens to tend — no workshops to labour in, and no provision for gymnastic exercises. A yard for the game of bowls, and a dimly lighted cellar for the monotonous occupation of sawing firewood, were all the means I could discover for providing amusement and occupation.

To a certain extent this state of matters may be beyond the power of Dr Ideler to remedy. But if he cannot find ground for his patients to cultivate, or workshops for them to labour in, he might at least improve their condition by diminishing the amount of restraint, and by providing such occupation as the limited means at his disposal would allow. Much may be effected by a determined will, but unfortunately Dr Ideler seems to attach less

importance to measures of general hygiène than to the use of the spinal douche. This cruel remedy is resorted to on alternate days in every case, male and female, when its use is not contra-indicated by complications of epilepsy, phthisis, or paralysis; and it is administered in the following manner :—

Between 10 and 11 A.M. the patients are placed singly in an empty bath, furnished with a formidable array of straps and buckles, to secure them during the torture. A small jet of cold water is forced out of a pump by the combined strength of four men, against the spinal column, along which it is made to play for the space of two minutes. The victim is then released, and his place occupied by another. My conductor acknowledged to me that the pain of this discipline was excessive. He had himself made trial of it, and with all his resolution could hardly support it for thirty seconds. On my remarking on the cruelty of the practice, he said, that many of the patients, notwithstanding their great dislike to the douche, derived much benefit from its use, and confessed that they felt better and more

comfortable on the days of its application than on the intervening days. It is impossible, however, to believe that *any* mode of treatment can be beneficially applied to *all* cases, especially one of so rude and painful a nature.

In no other asylum in Germany did I find this practice to prevail. Indeed, on making mention of it to the physicians of other establishments, it was treated as the crotchet of a clever and enthusiastic man, whose better judgment was in this instance warped by a favourite theory.

This spinal douche must not be confounded with the douche which is in use in many asylums, and which was especially recommended by the late M. Leuret of Paris as a most powerful and useful remedy in the moral treatment of insanity. According to that physician few patients are so mad as to be unable to exercise a certain degree of self-control, provided they be furnished with an adequate motive, and this he thought he had discovered in the painful and distressing sensations caused by a stream of ice-cold water directed for a few seconds on the head. In his work on the

moral treatment of insanity, he details many cases of wonderful success from the use of this remedy, which, however, he never applied except in cases where there was no evidence of organic disease of the brain. He used the douche as a punishment, to *bully* men, as it were, out of their hallucinations, as well as to repress violent and offensive conduct, and to enforce habits of cleanliness, &c. He maintained that the bare mention of the douche to a patient, who had once experienced it, was often sufficient to check a paroxysm of excitement, and gradually to establish the power of self-control. Nor is there anything unphilosophical in this application of a physical remedy. As the fear of punishment often deters the sane man from crime, and as insanity is in many instances but an exaggeration of the natural character, there seems to be no reason why in this state the dread of punishment should be inoperative.

Its use, however, should call forth the greatest caution, as nothing can be more cruel or unjustifiable than the application of so harsh a measure in cases where all power of self-control is extinguished.

Such patients only as are considered curable are admitted at "La Charité;" and I was consequently surprised to find among them many cases of that most hopeless form of insanity which is accompanied by general paralysis. Every psychological physician soon learns to dread the slight impediment of speech, and the scarce perceptible halt in the gait, which, along with the frequent accompaniment of great exaltation of ideas, usually usher in this most fatal malady.

My conductor informed me he had known one instance of recovery, but from the universal testimony of every other observer as to the fatal character of the disease, I cannot but consider this instance to have been only a temporary remission of the symptoms.

It struck me as somewhat remarkable, that the Hospital contained no patients whose lunacy was traceable to the late political disturbances in Prussia. The case is generally far otherwise in France, where the prevailing form of insanity is directly influenced by the state of the public mind. Hence every revolution sends its victims to the wards of Saltpêtrière and Bicêtre.

I am inclined to think, however, that more minute investigation would have shewn that political excitement is a cause of insanity among the inhabitants of Berlin, as well as among those of Paris. At any rate, in Damerow's Journal, there are various cases noted as due to this cause in other German asylums. Be this as it may, I saw in "La Charité" only one lunatic whose malady was attributed to any occurrence of public interest. He was reputed by his family to have been perfectly sane until the week previous to the solar eclipse in July last, when he manifested a high degree of excitement, and on the 28th (the day of the eclipse) had become quite mad. Since his admission, all his illusions had been connected with the eclipse; but these, at the period of my visit, were gradually subsiding, and he was then considered in a fair way of recovery.

With exception of three Catholics, all the patients were Protestants, and these were under the spiritual care of a chaplain, whose duty extends to the occasional teaching of the more tranquil patients. But there is no regular school, such as

has lately been introduced with such good effect into Hanwell, and also into many German asylums.

The number of attendants is in the proportion of one to ten patients ; but judging from their slender pay (which is only 15s. a month, in addition to food and clothing), they can hardly have the qualifications which ought to be possessed by those who wait upon the insane.

Indeed none should be selected for such an office, but men of a really superior nature ; for on their conduct, more perhaps than on anything else, depend both the present comfort and ultimate recovery of the patient. With ill-tempered and perverse attendants, the best adapted plan of treatment will almost certainly fail, while kindness and consideration often smooth the way to recovery, in cases which harsh measures would have rendered incurable.

He who " ministers to the mind diseased " must always remember, that the patient, however troublesome, combative, or deceitful, is the subject of disease, and not responsible for his actions. The man whose patience is soon tired, and whose

benevolence is soon exhausted, is not fitted to be an attendant on the insane.

But it is easier to find men capable of working a force-pump than such as these; and hence Dr Ideler trusts in his favourite douche, and neglects those remedies which the experience of the best men has proved most efficacious.

I was desirous of getting some statistical details as to the results of treatment, &c. &c., but it is not the custom of the German medical officers to publish annual reports, as is done in England and America. Hence any one desiring information must wade through folios of manuscript documents, which are accessible only by a special order of the Administration of the Institution. In exceptional cases, the medical officers publish reports in Henke's and Damerow's "Zeitschriften;" but this is an uncertain way of giving their brethren the benefit of their experience.

On the whole, the lunatic department of "La Charité" is capable of much improvement. The grand defects are, want of means of occupation, and too frequent recourse to restraint. The asylum is clean and well-ventilated, and no glaring

faults appear; but in these days of progress, such negative praise will no longer suffice. In a city like Berlin the plea of want of accommodation cannot be accepted, and it is a reproach to the authorities that the lunatics should have allotted to them only a *portion* of La Charité.

At Potsdam, within three-quarters of an hour of the capital, there are four or five useless and empty palaces, one of which His Prussian Majesty might well spare for conversion into an asylum, if means be wanting for building a new one.

My visit to the asylum of the Deaf and Dumb, and to the Institution for the Education of Idiots, was much more satisfactory. These establishments adjoin each other, and both are under the direction of Herr Sægert. My first visit was to the former, which belongs to the Government, and contains eighty pupils, from six to seventeen years of age.

On entering, I found them all at play in the garden, or practising gymnastic exercises, such as climbing perpendicular poles, leaping over hurdles, playing at leap-frog, &c. &c. They afterwards came in for study, when I had an op-

portunity of judging of the surprising progress they had made in moral and intellectual acquirements under the judicious and persevering efforts of Herr Sægert, of whose intelligence and devotedness I cannot speak too highly.

All except the very youngest could read aloud, and their articulation was much less harsh than is usually the case in the tone of voice of the deaf and dumb.

The pupils excelled particularly in drawing, and all imitative occupations; but their answers to abstract moral and intellectual questions also shewed a general mental advancement, which appears wonderful when we bear in mind the obstacles to be overcome in their education.

H. Sægert informed me that several of his most advanced pupils had been appointed confidential clerks in the public offices, on the principle that their misfortune especially qualified them for offices of trust; but there is little real weight in this qualification, for he who would *tell* a secret would have little scruple in writing it. It is, however, a very suitable employment to those whose means of occupation are necessarily limited.

With reference to the question of hereditary transmission, H. Sægert informed me that so far as his observation went, one out of every fifteen children, born of deaf and dumb parents, inherited the same infirmity.

The Idiot School is a private undertaking of H. Sægert, and is an institution of great interest. The pupils are divided into three classes, according to the degree of intelligence they possess.

In the first, or lowest, there were seven children, two boys and five girls, between five and eleven years of age, whose training was just commencing. Their occupations were in harmony with their low mental condition, and were chiefly limited to the fitting of differently shaped pieces of wood into notches adapted for them on a board, and matching colours of similar hues. In this way the senses of sight and touch are exercised, habits of attention gradually acquired, and the children at length taught to discriminate the letters of the alphabet.

In an adjoining room were the two more advanced classes; the one containing fourteen children, the other and most advanced only seven,

from ten to seventeen years of age. It was interesting to watch the various degrees of intelligence depicted in the faces of the different groups ; —while those of the first bore the stamp of unmistakeable idiocy, a glimmering of intelligence appeared in the countenances of the second, and those of the third became lighted up by a play of feature, not equal certainly to that of healthy children, but immeasurably removed from the original gaze of vacancy.

Herr Sægert is in the habit of having portraits of his pupils made at their reception and at different intervals during their education, and he invariably finds that the improvement in the physical expression goes hand in hand with the degree of mental progress which they have made ; and here his experience is in unison with the views of those physiologists who hold the brain to exercise an involuntary reflex influence upon the muscular system.

Several of the pupils were examined in my presence. A boy was asked to point out the situation of London on a large map of Europe suspended against the wall, and he did so imme-

diately. He next traced with a cane the whole line of route from London to Berlin by Cologne. In like manner, on a map of Berlin, he followed the different streets leading from the school to the street "Unter den Linden," where my hotel was situated.

Herr Sægert then read to me a letter which another boy had just finished to his parents. The penmanship was clear and good, and the contents gave no indication of having been written by one who, four years ago, had been an absolute idiot. He gave an account of his occupations, his hours of play and of study, described a visit he had made to the Zoological Gardens, and ended by expressing a hope of soon seeing his parents. This boy had been a cretin, and been sent to Berlin by Dr Guggenbühl. On arrival he shewed no symptoms of intelligence, and was affected, moreover, with a large goitre; but so efficacious had been the system of physical and moral training, that in the period of four years, his mind had been raised to the degree of intelligence I have just described, and the goitre had altogether disappeared. The treatment consisted mainly in general hy-

gienic measures, in allowing generous diet, in the gradually increased application of mental and muscular training, and in frictions of iodine to the goitre. In modern medicine the great value of attending to the general rules of health is fully appreciated, and less faith than formerly is placed on the action of powerful and supposed specific remedies. The observance of this doctrine in the treatment of the insane has materially augmented the number of cures.

Of the seven pupils in the most advanced class, three had suffered from aggravated scrofula. One had had hydrocephalus, and the remaining three, on admission, had been affected with rickets. But at the period of my visit, although not equal to children of robust constitution, they presented no physical deformity, nor did their appearance in any way indicate the low mental and bodily condition from which they had been elevated.

On inquiring of H. Sægert regarding their ideas on religion, he put a number of questions to them as to the nature of God and our Saviour, and concerning a future state, and its rewards and punishments. All these questions were an-

swered so satisfactorily that I could not help asking H. Sægert if several of the pupils had not been merely epileptic rather than idiotic. He assured me, however, that of the twenty-one pupils in the two advanced classes, one only had ever had an epileptic fit, and that the boy whose answers pleased me most, had originally been one of the lowest specimens of humanity he had ever known; and so thoroughly satisfied was H. Sægert of their comprehension of the great truths of religion, that he intended to have five of the seven confirmed by the bishop on his annual visitation in November.

Results so encouraging are only to be attained by efforts the most unremitting. There is one teacher for every ten pupils, but to do full justice to the subject H. Sægert thinks there ought to be a teacher for every three pupils. Hence the surprise he expressed to me at finding, on a visit he had paid during the summer to the New Idiot School at Highgate, only three teachers to seventy-five pupils.

Of the possibility, then, of teaching idiots there can no longer remain any doubt. In this good

work also, France has the honour of having taken the lead. The first systematic attempt to remedy the natural defects of this most helpless class was begun by M. Séguin, who, under the counsels of Itard and Esquirol, commenced a class in the "Hospice des Incurables" of Paris about fifteen years ago. The results were considered so satisfactory, that, by a decree of the prefect of the Seine in 1842, M. Séguin was appointed to apply his method in the "Hospice des Incurables," and afterwards in the "Bicêtre" of Paris. In the latter asylum there is now a large and flourishing school for the education of idiots, under the superintendence of M. Vallée, whose successful labours in behalf of the idiot I have often had the pleasure of witnessing; and it may not be out of place here to describe a public examination of his pupils, at which I was present in the spring of 1849.

They were ninety in number, and from the ages of seven up to eighteen years. All were drawn up in double file round the hall, and it was amusing to see how, even in such a field, the national fondness of the French for "spectacle"

displayed itself. Many of the boys supported long poles with flags attached to them, and at the head of the party was a drummer, in appearance the most idiotic of the whole, to the sound of whose martial strains the pupils marched with military precision round the room. A song was then sung, in the chorus of which nearly all the boys joined. This was followed by a dance of a very complicated character, performed by four of the youths, and which included a variety of movements of the arms, as well as of the legs, all of which were artistically and even gracefully executed. Foils were next introduced, and a joust at fencing was so hotly contested that some of the foils were broken. A series of gymnastic feats followed, after which the examination assumed a more mental character. Two boys acted a scene from a play; a third recited a piece of poetry; some were examined in arithmetic; one boy multiplied four figures by four mentally, while another worked the same question on a board, both with correct results. Colours of various kinds were then exhibited and accurately named, and the senses of taste and smell were tested with a number of che-

mical substances, such as camphor, vinegar, sal-volatile, peppermint, rhubarb, &c., all of which were readily recognized on application to the nose or tongue. In like manner the pupils acquired ideas of form, of weight, and of thickness by handling pieces of wood cut into various shapes, such as squares, oblongs, octagons, isoceles, &c., which were at once detected by the sense of touch. The object of all this was to exercise as much as possible the various mental faculties, and the different senses, and in this way to give strength to feeble organs. We might copy this practice with much benefit in our common schools, where too much is attempted to be taught by language or description, and too little by the presentation of the objects themselves. Now the success in the Idiot School is due to the substitution of *things* for *words*.

The examination lasted two hours, and interested me exceedingly. I was surprised that so much could have been made out of materials so apparently hopeless. A cynical Frenchman, however, who was present at the time, whispered to me that "un chien intelligent" could be taught

as much. I differed from him entirely, for even if the impossibility of giving ideas to the idiot were admitted, it is surely a great matter gained to teach him the observances and decencies of life—to sit upon a chair instead of rolling in the dust, to feed, dress, undress, and wash himself, and so be invested with at least the outward semblances of humanity. Without teaching, an idiot can do nothing for himself. He possesses no natural sentiments of shame, and has as little sense of cleanliness as a brute. But by tuition, not only may these feelings be aroused, but far greater things may be achieved. Thus, M. Vallée has taught his pupils, in addition to regular, orderly, and cleanly habits, to read and write, to calculate and commit to memory, to draw, to play on various musical instruments, and, in short, to display talents frequently approaching to those of normally constituted children.

Before I left the school, M. Vallée brought up to me a fearfully deformed object, who walked on his knees, which were cased in iron caps, and whose expression of face was that of complete fatuity. Dominos were brought, and I was asked

to play a game with "Charles." Though little skilled in the game, I did not quail before such an antagonist. I was beaten, however, and hideous and grotesque were the contortions by which poor "Charles" indicated his joy at my discomfiture. His delight was shared by several of the boys who were spectators of the game—for there is an *esprit de corps* even in an Idiot School.

It is now upwards of seven years since M. Vallée commenced his labours, and, great as his success has been, he thinks it would have been still greater, but for the disadvantages of inadequate accommodation and limited funds. His philanthropic endeavours are exciting considerable attention both in England and America; and the State of Massachusetts lately sent over a gentleman who passed some time in the family of M. Vallée, that he might make himself master of his system, with the view of carrying it into operation on his return to the United States.

Strenuous efforts are now being made in various parts of Germany to educate the idiot,—especially in the kingdom of Wirtemberg, which,

after Switzerland and Savoy, is said to contain a greater number of cretins in proportion to its population than any other European country. They have been estimated at 5000, of which 150 are in the lowest state of mental and bodily degradation.

In 1835, Herr Haldenwang, the clergyman of the small town of Wildberg, in the Black Forest, commenced a school which he carried on with unwearied zeal, and at considerable pecuniary sacrifice, until 1847, when the government, recognising the importance of the subject, converted the quondam nunnery of Marienberg, in the district of Reutlingen, into an institution for the education of idiots. The building is advantageously situated in the Swabian Alps, at an elevation of 2200 feet above the level of the sea, and in a district of country where cretinism and goitre are unknown. The present number of pupils is only about fifty, but the house is intended ultimately to accommodate 150.

In 1848, a second establishment was founded at Rieth, in the district of Vachingen; and last year a third was opened by Herr Helferich (for-

merly an assistant of Dr Guggenbühl) at Bellevue, near Stutgard, for the education of idiots of the upper and middle classes. Other institutions are being gradually formed in different parts of Germany, among which I may notice Pforzheim, in Baden, and Berndorf, near Coblenz.*

Before quitting the subject of Idiot Schools, I may mention that the first attempt made in England in behalf of this unfortunate class, was by Miss C. White—a young lady residing at Bath, who, partly at her own expense, and partly with the assistance of charitable friends, founded a school in that city, to which, for several years, she devoted all her time and energies. I have frequently had opportunities of visiting this institution, and of admiring the unwearied zeal which she brought to a task, then considered by many altogether hopeless. The removal of her family from Bath has since withdrawn her from her benevolent labours; but the school is still carried on, and the example thus set has been followed at Highgate, Colchester, and Wells.

* For further particulars on this subject, see an article in Damerow's Psychological Journal, vol. vii., p. 63.

Leaving Berlin, I proceeded to Dresden, chiefly with the view of visiting the asylum of Sonnenstein at Pirna, which is an ancient and picturesquely situated town on the banks of the Elbe, within an hour of Dresden by the Prague railway.

Sonnenstein stands on the top of a steep hill, overlooking the town. It had originally been constructed as a fortress, had afterwards been used as a state prison, and finally was converted into a lunatic asylum in 1811, although two years afterwards it was temporarily reconverted into a fortress by the French, and maintained against the Allied Armies for several months.

Like many other asylums in Germany, therefore, it labours under the disadvantage of serving a purpose for which it was not originally intended. As a consequence, the apartments are inconveniently arranged, and many of them are low-roofed, and badly lighted. These drawbacks, however, are in a great degree compensated by its lofty and airy situation, and by the magnificent view obtained from the windows. What can be

more soothing to the distempered mind of the lunatic, than the prospect of a beautiful and richly-wooded country, through which, between sloping banks covered with vineyards, flows the noble Elbe, bearing on its bosom vessels of every description ! Of late years, a new feature has been added to this lovely landscape by the railway, whose trains pass along the foot of the hill, and afford a constant source of interest and amusement to the lunatic.

I had introductions to Dr Lessing, the medical director, and to Dr Seiffert, the senior assistant physician. The former unfortunately was confined by illness, but I was conducted with great politeness over the whole establishment by Dr S.

In spite of its elevated situation, Sonnenstein is abundantly supplied with water, conveyed by pipes from the remoter hills. It is intended for the reception of curable cases only (the incurables being received at the asylum at Kolditz), and at the period of my visit, contained 160 male and 80 female patients. These are divided into three classes ; the 1st paying about £66 ; the 2d, £33 ; and the 3d, £16 per annum.

For the sake of comparison, I may state, that the pauper-board of the Edinburgh Asylum (equivalent to the third class at Sonnenstein) varies in different years, according to the price of provisions, from £20 to £24.

The patients of the different classes live separately ; each class having its own dormitories and dining-rooms.

The treatment followed is essentially hygienic. There are no heroic remedies, nor vaunted specifics,—no “bains de surprise,” nor rotatory chairs ; and the abstraction of blood, either general or local, is rarely ever resorted to. The hope of cure is placed in healthy occupation of mind and body, a liberal allowance of good food, great attention to cleanliness and warm clothing, and abundance of out-of-door exercise. As a means of affording this last, labour in the fields is held in the highest estimation ; and accordingly, many of the able-bodied patients are hired out to the neighbouring farmers, accompanied of course by an attendant. The wages (which vary with the capability of the labourer) are paid to the asylum, which assigns a portion to the patients, by way of encourage-

ment. There is, besides, a large extent of garden-ground attached to the asylum, laid out partly in flowers and partly in vegetables, and cultivated by the less robust patients.

So important a means of cure is agricultural labour considered in France, that the government, at the instance of M. Ferrus, made over the farm of Sainte Anne, containing 100 acres, to the asylum of Bicêtre, from which it is about two miles distant, expressly for the employment of the lunatics of that establishment. It possesses a bleaching-green, a dairy, and an extensive piggery; and, at the time of my visit, was cultivated by 120 lunatics, who lived on the spot, and formed a quiet and industrious community, under the surveillance of a resident director. In some respects this separation of the farm from the asylum possesses advantages, to which I shall presently allude.

The patients at Sonnenstein are occupied in winter and in bad weather, with various in-door employments, such as tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, and gymnastics on a systematic plan.

Great attention is paid to the functions of the

skin ; and hot, cold, and shower baths are much resorted to. I saw only two patients under physical restraint ; the liberal number of attendants, one to eight, rendering a resort to it seldom necessary.

One of the chief, and indeed characteristic advantages of Sonnenstein, is its possession of a separate hospital for convalescents. This is situated at the base of the hill, in close proximity to the town, and is overhung by prettily wooded banks and terraced walks. Separated entirely from the principal asylum, and having a distinct establishment of its own, it affords a valuable means of testing the mental condition of the patient, and ascertaining how far he is fitted again to mingle in the active concerns of life.

The abrupt removal from the wards of a mad-house to wonted occupations, is too often followed by relapse, and hence an intervening probation and prolonged separation from former associates are frequently of the greatest importance in ensuring permanent recovery. It is on this account, that I consider the separation of the farm of Bicêtre from the parent asylum as a positive advantage.

In ordinary diseases it often happens that im-

provement ceases before recovery has been established. And in such cases we frequently find a malady, which had resisted the most judicious medical and hygienic treatment, yield at once to change of air and scene.

Insanity forms no exception to this rule; and its successful treatment would be greatly promoted, by every asylum having attached to it, but at some distance, an establishment destined solely for the reception of convalescents. That of Sonnenstein has accommodation for twenty patients; but at the period of my visit, it contained only six males and six females. To my surprise, one of the latter was a young Englishwoman, recovering from an attack of acute mania. I conversed with her for some time, and she was well-pleased to be addressed in the language of comfort in her native tongue.

Before closing my notice of Sonnenstein, I should mention that there is a fourth class of boarders, who pay about £90 per annum. These have each a separate parlour and servant, but of this class there were only four patients at the time of my visit.

Leubus.—Having heard much said in praise of the asylum of Leubus in Silesia, I determined on visiting it, and accordingly left Dresden for that purpose by the Breslau railway. After seven hours travelling, I reached the station of Maltsch, whence I proceeded for six miles through a forest of oak trees to Leubus.

The building, which is of vast size, had originally been erected as a palace, was afterwards used as a convent, and finally, in 1830, converted into a lunatic asylum, under the able superintendence of Dr Martini, who still continues the medical director, assisted by two junior physicians.

Leubus stands on a slight elevation, on the right bank of the Oder, and about a quarter of a mile distant from the river, which, during heavy rains, as at the period of my visit, is apt to overflow its banks, and inundate the neighbouring country. As a consequence, intermittent fever prevails among the peasantry, although, as Dr Martini informed me, it rarely attacks the inmates of the asylum. These consisted of 110 pauper patients and 36 pensionnaires; the latter belonging generally to the upper classes of society,

and including several Russian and Polish counts and countesses.

The board of the pauper class is partly paid by a tax of one groschen ($1\frac{1}{4}$ d.) upon every inhabitant of Silesia above 14 years of age,* which produces an aggregate of 32,000 thalers (nearly £5000 sterling). Of this amount 14,000 thalers are assigned to Leubus, the remainder being applied to the support of Plagwitz and Brieg, the two asylums destined for the reception of incurable patients. The rate of board for the pensionnaires is fixed at £60 per annum for natives of Silesia, and £75 for strangers.

Although Leubus, like Sonnenstein, is used for a purpose to which it was not originally destined, its accommodations are spacious and convenient. There are three or four dormitories which contain seventeen beds each, and a number of smaller apartments each with two beds—an arrangement not approved of in England. There are only three or four solitary cells, which are used chiefly for the isolation and observation of new cases. None of these are padded; Dr Martini holding the view

* The population of the province of Silesia is 3,000,000.

above expressed, that this is a needless precaution.

With reference to the question of restraint, Dr M. considers its total abolition objectionable, and maintains that cases occasionally occur in which its application is positive kindness to the patient. Nor are these the sentiments of a callous, hard-hearted man; for never did I witness a more kind, sympathising, and affectionate manner than that of Dr M. towards his patients.

During the three days which I passed under his hospitable roof, I had frequent opportunities of accompanying him through the asylum, and of witnessing the manner of his reception by patients of every class. Young and old, rich and poor—all eagerly seized his hand, pressed it to their lips, and manifested, in an unmistakeable manner, the respect and love in which they held him.

Dr M. classifies his patients under the four heads of "Mania," "Monomania," "Melancholia," and "Dementia;" and his experience of nearly 2000 cases received within six months of

the invasion of the disease, has given the proportion of cures as equal to 75 per cent. of the first class, 52 of the second, the same of the third, and 26 of the fourth class ; but this proportion of recoveries, of course, diminishes, if the malady have been of long standing. Statistics of this kind are, however, of little practical value, as few physicians would classify their patients precisely alike.

The view from the upper part of the building is beautiful and varied, and the grounds and gardens are of great extent, the former yielding abundant store of vegetables, and the latter being well-stocked with fruit trees and flowers.

There is a plentiful supply of water, which, however, does not reach higher than the basement story ; but Dr M. does not reckon this a disadvantage, as he considers the carrying of water to the upper portions of the asylum a useful occupation for many of the patients.

The refectory of the convent is now a spacious music hall where concerts are frequently held ; and in a different part of the building there is a small theatre where appropriate pieces are occa-

sionally acted, the patients, however, appearing only as spectators.

What had originally been the reception-hall of the palace is now converted into a winter gymnasium. Each cell and dormitory is heated by a stove, while the corridors are warmed by a hot-air apparatus.

The portion of the asylum assigned to the pensionnaires is totally distinct from that of the other patients. They have separate gardens, and mess either alone, or in small sections duly classified.

I was present at the dinner of the pauper class. Everything passed with the same order and tranquillity as at Hanwell, and the food (which was a sort of Irish stew—potatoes seasoned with meat) was abundant and savoury.

With reference to convalescent hospitals, Dr Martini considers them to be of little use unless at such a distance from the parent institution as to present an entirely new series of scenes and objects, of persons and occupations. He thinks it a mistake to suppose that patients recovering their reason are shocked to find themselves in an asylum and surrounded by lunatics ; on the con-

trary, he is of opinion that they gradually become reconciled to their situation, and, so far from being distressed when they begin to be conscious of it, rather take an interest in their less fortunate associates, and feel a pleasure in assisting the attendants to wait upon them. Hence he considers that a *partial* removal from their accustomed habits, by unsettling their ideas, is apt to prove more detrimental than beneficial. He admits, however, the value of an entirely new series of ideas and objects.

During a long conversation with Dr M. on the subject of criminal lunatics in Prussia, he detailed to me the case of Sefeloge, who attempted to murder the king of Prussia by firing a pistol at him, which wounded him severely in the arm. Having been considered by the Government as perhaps the most learned and experienced psychological physician in Germany, Dr M. was summoned to Berlin to investigate the mental state of the prisoner. After eleven long interviews, scattered over a period of four weeks, he acquired the conviction of his insanity, and drew up a report to this effect, on the presentation of which

to the Government, Sefeloge was removed to the asylum of Halle without the formality of a trial.

The history of this case contrasts favourably with the English proceedings in the affair of Lieutenant Pate, who was tried for an assault on the Queen. The Prussian Government took for granted that a man who had devoted a life-time of laborious study to the subject of mental disease, was more capable of correctly estimating the precise state of mind of the criminal, than could possibly be any judge or jury whose attention was only incidentally called to the consideration of a matter so full of difficulty. Baron Alderson and Mr Warren may hold a different opinion; yet would not both very readily admit the absurdity of a medical man pretending to understand the intricacies of a matter of law without previous study? Or what would they think of a jury of farmers or seamen being summoned to determine whether a man were, or were not, labouring under consumption? One witness might maintain that the subject of the trial was in perfect health, because he had seen him walking abroad; another, that he had a slight cold, but no disease

that need prevent him following his occupation ; a third, that he must be quite well, as he had met him at dinner. Others, on the contrary, might maintain that he was very ill, because he was fast losing flesh, and was frequently bathed in perspiration. The rational method of ascertaining his real state would be to call in the aid of men who had made disease of the chest their special study. So, in the case of criminal lunatics, it is natural to suppose that the opinions of men who have devoted their lives to the study of mental disease, and to whom every phase of insanity is familiar, must come nearer the truth than those of judges, however learned, or of juries, however conscientious.

On the whole I was extremely gratified by my visit to Leubus, which appears to possess all the improvements which modern science has suggested for the treatment of the insane. During my visit one of the assistant physicians was absent on a tour with a young convalescent gentleman, for the confirmation of whose cure change of air and scene had been deemed necessary. No means

to aid recovery are left untried, while kind usage and constant occupation are made the ground-work of all treatment.

I took leave of Dr Martini with much regret, and with the feeling of parting from an old and esteemed friend. Indeed I do not remember ever to have met with a physician whose clearness of judgment, and whose kindness and benevolence of manner more favourably impressed me. His head and heart are alike active in the discharge of duties, which are to him a true labour of love.

Prague.—The asylum of Prague, in Bohemia, is finely situated on an eminence in the immediate vicinity of that ancient and romantic town, and commands varied and extensive views of the surrounding country, and of the river Moldau gliding along between its vine-clad banks. This asylum is the only Austrian Institution I had an opportunity of visiting, and I am bound to admit that whatever political sins Austria may have to answer for, nothing I had yet seen surpassed the good management of the Prague asylum. But political freedom does not always insure the best

administration of public charities, as was strikingly proved to me at Hamburgh.

This asylum consists of three buildings; the two lateral date from the middle of last century, while the central, which is much the largest, has been completed only within the last five years. It is well supplied with water, and is surrounded by extensive gardens, which afford ample means for the occupation and amusement of the patients. The house is clean and well ventilated, and contained 570 patients, of whom 331 were paupers, paying no board, while the remainder were divided into three classes, paying respectively 2s., 1s. 3d., and 10d. per day. I was accompanied through the establishment by Dr Fischel, chief physician for the time being; Dr Riedel, the medical director, having lately left to take charge of the new asylum at Vienna.

Every class of patients, epileptic, paralytic, and idiot, is here admitted;—hence the per-centage of recoveries is small, but, for reasons already stated, I could obtain no precise statistical details.

The dormitories contain from two to twelve beds, and there are thirty solitary cells, devoted

exclusively to the violent of either sex. Physical restraint is very sparingly used, and indeed this is the only asylum in Germany in which I saw no instance of its application. The treatment pursued is founded on the same general principles which I had elsewhere observed,—isolation, attention to diet and regimen, baths, exercise, and employment in the open air. There are two large billiard-rooms, a reading-room and library, and a spacious hall for concerts and *conversazioni*. In this last I found about forty patients, listening to the music of four violins, three of the performers being convalescent patients.

In all the asylums of Germany music is a never-failing source of amusement, and is a natural consequence of the almost universal diffusion of musical taste and knowledge through all ranks of the community.

The Prague asylum has a large handsome church, common to the three divisions, but not open to the public.

The Government is still occupied in improving and completing the establishment, and it is creditable to those in power, that, at a time when

the finances of the country are in so disordered a state, the claims of the poor lunatic both here and at Vienna are not overlooked. The new asylum at Vienna has been built at a cost of 800,000 florins (£80,000), and is the largest in Germany.

I left Prague with the impression that the asylum was a thoroughly well-conducted establishment. Dr Fischel is a zealous and efficient man, and turns his advantages to practical account, by giving clinical instruction to the students, several of whom were attending a lecture at the time of my arrival.

Halle.—My next visit was to the asylum at Halle, in Prussia, of which Dr Damerow, chief editor of the German Psychological Journal, is medical director. It is a large and imposing edifice, newly erected, and situated on a rising ground about two miles from the town of Halle, of which, and of the surrounding country, it commands an extensive view.

This is one of the few German asylums originally built for its present purpose. It is divided into three distinct departments, for the curable,

incurable, and maniacal patients. I was very politely received by Dr Damerow, who conducted me over the whole establishment, and was anxious to give me every information.

The number of patients was 303; 165 being males, and 138 females. Of these, as at the other asylums I had visited, some paid board, while others were received as paupers.

The dormitories are of various sizes, and there are fourteen cells devoted exclusively to maniacal cases. Means of occupation and amusement are afforded by forty-two acres of ground, which are cultivated entirely by the lunatics, and there are, moreover, workshops, concert and reading rooms, and a gymnasium. I found here several patients under restraint, Dr Damerow strenuously contending that its judicious application is often a valuable and even humane means of treatment. Among the patients was Sefeloge, who, as already mentioned, had been transferred to Halle on the report of Dr Martini. He is a man of respectable appearance, and about thirty-five years of age.

As usual, I could procure no statistical report

of the asylum, but Dr Damerow informed me that of the last 800 admissions, 300 had been dismissed cured—an extraordinary proportion, when it is remembered that the admissions include every variety of insanity.

Siegburg.—The last German asylum which I visited was that of Siegburg, seven miles from Bonn. It was originally a Benedictine convent, and occupies a situation of great natural beauty, on the top of the rock of St Michel, commanding an extensive view of the neighbouring country, and of the windings of the river Sieg. The trees and shrubs, however, are allowed to grow much too close to the asylum, and have the effect, not only of interrupting the fine view, but also of excluding, to some extent, both light and air from the apartments of the basement storey.

The building was converted to its present purpose under the direction of the celebrated Dr Jacobi, who is still the chief physician, assisted by three juniors, one of whom, Dr Föcke, in absence of Jacobi, kindly conducted me over the establishment. The asylum has an extensive

tract of land, all under cultivation by the lunatics, who are about 200 in number. The internal accommodations however are very inadequate, and this is especially the case in the apartments for the violent, which were overcrowded and not over clean.* In them I saw several patients of both sexes under restraint, and notably two, who were enclosed in a sort of wooden sentry box, with only their heads and necks exposed. I was not a little struck with this apparatus, which looked more like a Chinese punishment than a means of medical treatment; but, on asking Dr Föcke the history of so strange a practice, I had the mortification of learning that the model of the apparatus had been brought by Dr Jacobi from England many years ago, and that they had always retained the name of "English chairs"! I trust that no such instrument of duration is to be found in England at the present day.

This was the only asylum in Germany where I

* It is but justice, however, to Dr Jacobi to say, that he has made earnest and repeated representations to the Diet of the Rhenish Provinces, regarding the enlargement and improvement of the asylum.

found a published report of its proceedings, with one of which Dr Föcke kindly furnished me. It embraces a period of above four years, including the last quarter of 1846, and the years 1847-48-49 and 1850. During this period there were admitted 360 males and 321 females, of which number there were dismissed as cured, 149 males and 128 females; as improved, 19 males and 18 females; as incurable, 151 males and 104 females; while 2 males and 10 females had been removed during the treatment; and 30 males and 41 females had died.

I may mention that Dr Jacobi considers no patient as incurable, however long the insanity may have continued, until there be distinct evidence of organic disease of the brain; and, adhering to this view, he persists in the treatment for years, being occasionally, though rarely, rewarded by seeing recoveries take place after the lapse of long periods of time.

Siegburg is intended for the reception of curable cases only, and contains patients of every class of society. The highest rate of board is £75 for a native of Rhenish Prussia, or £97 for

a foreigner; which sum entitles the patient to a separate parlour and bedroom, to the services of a special attendant, and to the frequent use of the horses and carriages belonging to the establishment. This rate is much below what would be paid for corresponding advantages in England.

The treatment is essentially hygienic, and the staff of officials is very complete, comprehending in its superior department a chief physician and three assistant physicians, two clergymen, a secretary, and a teacher.

In the Prussian asylums, owing to the universal education of the people, teachers of mere reading and writing are not so much wanted as in the asylums of England, where, from the education of the masses being comparatively neglected, a large portion of the patients are unable either to read or write. Almost every Prussian subject has, on the contrary, received at least the elements of education; as was proved to me by a visit I made at Berlin to the new prison, called the "Cellen Gefängniss," on the Pentonville model, where out of a total number of 615 prisoners, I found only two who could neither read nor write.

Out of a similar number in England, 200 would have been a nearer proportion.

But although in all the asylums I visited, except those of Hamburgh and Berlin, there were ample means of occupation and amusement, both in the open air and within doors, there appeared a lack of endeavour to address the intellectual and moral faculties of the patients, especially of the higher ranks of society. This is a serious evil, but one not difficult to remedy.

I am far from agreeing with M. Guislain, who recommends that all mental effort should be abstained from in the case of the insane. He views the brain in the same light as he does the lungs or the eye, namely, as one organ destined for the performance of one particular function; and hence he considers mental repose to be as necessary to an over-excited brain, as the avoidance of speaking to the recovery of a diseased lung, or the exclusion of light to that of an inflamed eye. But the comparison is faulty. The brain is a congeries of organs, exercising a variety of functions, one or more of which may be disordered without necessitating the disorder of the whole; and ex-

perience goes to prove that the return to healthy action of the diseased portion is promoted by the moderate exercise of that which remains healthy, the activity of the latter absorbing, as it were, the nervous energy which would otherwise be accumulated in the excited organs. Hence the necessity of providing mental as well as manual occupation for the patients, who are composed of all denominations of society, and whose numbers frequently include professional, and other highly educated men, to whom toil in the fields, or labour in the workshops, not only would appear to be derogatory in a moral sense, but might prove hurtful in a physical one. For the benefit of this class, therefore, every mixed asylum should possess a qualified instructor, whose duty should be to endeavour to give a healthy direction to the minds of the patients, and to rouse their attention by lectures on the experimental sciences.

In the American asylums lectures are a common means of amusement and instruction; and Dr Browne has in some degree adopted this plan at the Crichton Institution, near Dumfries, where many of the patients are occasionally taken to

attend lectures in the town, or to witness theatrical performances. They are likewise encouraged in literary pursuits at home by the printing of a small monthly periodical, which is written by the lunatics. Nothing indeed is better calculated to break the chain of morbid fancies, and to rouse the torpid faculties, than thus to stir up a spirit of literary emulation; for whatever tends to withdraw the distempered mind from its own melancholy broodings, is an onward step in the march of recovery.

The reader will perceive, that with reference to the important question of restraint, I found in Germany no advocate for its total abolition; nor am I aware of any asylum in France where its use has been entirely discontinued. In Paris, in the very hospital where Pinel in one day, sixty years ago, removed the chains from forty maniacs I have seen six men in the wards of M. Voisin lying bound in strait jackets on their beds. Indeed, out of England I do not know of any asylum where restraint is not more or less resorted to. The German physicians, for instance, maintain that in many cases it cannot safely be dispensed

with. When I met this asseveration by quoting the examples of Hanwell and of Haslar, they objected that the restraint which is exercised by the arms of attendants has no advantages over that of the strait waistcoat. Still I think they may fairly be charged with undue prejudice in opposing with so much pertinacity a system which they have never put to the proof. He who has honestly and earnestly made trial of the non-restraint system, may fairly express a hostile opinion; but this licence cannot be allowed to him who condemns without trial, and who assumes a danger, which under judicious management does not exist.

When Dr Anderson was appointed to the Royal Insane Hospital of Haslar, his first act was to remove the irons from fifteen lunatics. The attendants were in dismay at the order, and being alarmed for the safety of their lives, threatened to resign their situations, which some actually did. But Dr Anderson was firm in his purpose, and the consequence was, that excitement speedily gave place to tranquillity, and that the very same men who had been furious and

violent while galled by irons were soon to be seen walking quietly in the wards. Nor is this to be wondered at. Insane patients do not cease to be human beings, and whatever tends to irritate and exasperate the healthy mind, is calculated, *a fortiori*, to arouse the passions of the lunatic.

Guided by this principle, Dr Anderson proceeded to remove all appearance of imprisonment. He did away with the huge bunches of keys; adapted all the locks to one small key; substituted a light net-work of wire for ponderous iron bars; replaced dead walls by open gratings; and raised, entirely by the labour of his patients, two mounds of earth, which, overtopping the walls of the garden, enable the lunatic seaman to look upon the ever-changing face of that element, on which the best years of his life have been spent. On each of these mounds a summer-house has been erected, seated in which the veteran tar may gaze upon a scene eminently qualified to gratify his eye, distract his gloom, and carry back his dis-tempered thoughts to happier days.

So efficient have been these means in altering the character of the asylum, that it is now a con-

stant recreation of the lunatic seamen of Haslar to go out in a barge, granted, at the express request of Dr A., by the Admiralty for their use. I have been rowed all round the harbour of Portsmouth by a crew of eight lunatics, accompanied only by Dr A. and one attendant, and feeling no more apprehension of danger, than if I had been in the gig of the guard ship hard by.

It is a mistake to suppose that lunatics are necessarily dangerous, or even mischievous; on the contrary, a great majority are always amenable to authority judiciously exercised, and as, from their very malady, all chance of combination is prevented, extensive riot or disorder is less likely to happen in their case than in that of the sane.

Ten years have now elapsed since the above mentioned improvements were effected at Haslar, and as yet no untoward consequence has arisen. Thus the experience of some of the best asylums in England has proved the practicability entirely of abolishing mechanical restraint. At Hanwell, for instance, with its 1000 lunatics, at Lincoln, York, and many other places, it is never practised; and,

doubtless, what has been done in England may be done elsewhere. It is possible that when the present generation shall have passed away, the prejudices which still maintain its use on the Continent of Europe, will have passed away also. Still it cannot be denied that the modified application of restraint finds advocates in some of the first asylums of Europe and America, among men whose high moral and intellectual qualities do honour to the profession to which they belong. Its total abolition, no doubt, engenders the necessity of an increase in the number of attendants, and, by consequence, an increase of expenditure ; but with those who urge this reason for its maintenance I have less sympathy than with such as conscientiously urge its use as a necessary, and even humane mode of treatment. When there is a lack of attendants, occasional restraint certainly becomes necessary to prevent greater evils—but where there exists a sufficiency of “appliances and means,” the question to be decided is, whether the restraint exercised by men or by mechanical means is to be preferred. Much might be urged in favour of both views, but it does not consist

with my present purpose to enter upon any lengthened discussion of the matter. I content myself with giving in my adhesion to those, who, having tried both systems, give the preference to the living instrument, as capable of exercising moral as well as physical control, the operation of the former frequently rendering the latter unnecessary.

Before quitting this subject, I may mention that I had lately an opportunity of visiting the county asylum at York, which is under the able superintendence of Mr Hill. This gentleman appears to possess very enlightened views on the treatment of insanity, and has abolished to a greater extent than is usual, the restrictions generally deemed necessary in the abodes of the insane. He acts on the principle of appearing to treat his patients as a sane community, while he never loses sight of the fact that they are in reality lunatics. In accordance with this principle, he insisted, at his appointment, on the removal of a lofty partition in the chapel, which separated the male and female patients; he did away with the iron gratings which formerly sur-

rounded the fire-places ; and in all his arrangements he has studiously avoided whatever might tend to excite suspicion and distrust in the minds of his patients. He even sends parties of both sexes to market with vegetables raised on the grounds of the asylum, and the city of York is thus partially supplied by lunatic labour.

In this way, he not only promotes the welfare and recovery of his patients, but to a considerable extent renders the institution self-supporting.

It is a question of political economy, how far the labour of those who are supported at the public expense should be allowed to compete in the market with that of the independent labourer ; and it might be worth Mr H.'s while to consider if he could not so far alter his arrangements, as to have all the produce of his grounds consumed in the asylum. By keeping cows, pigs, poultry, and sheep, and cultivating vegetables for home consumption only, he might usefully and profitably occupy his patients without interfering with the rights of labour beyond the walls of the institution.

Gheel.—Before returning to England I was anxious to visit the village of Gheel in Belgium, which from time immemorial has been a place of refuge for the insane of that country.

The village is situated about thirty-five miles from Antwerp, in the department of the “Deux Nêthes,” and is reached by diligence in about seven hours. There are two considerable and populous towns, Lierre and Herenthal, on the route ; but the country generally is flat, barren, and uninteresting, being covered for the most part with heath and fir, with here and there some tracts of cultivation. The village is approached through a straight formal avenue of poplars, about three miles in length, and consists chiefly of a “Place,” and one long wide street, having a large church at each end, the one called St Dymphna (written Nympna by Esquirol), the other St Amans. The peculiarity of Gheel consists in there being no large building for the reception of the lunatics, but in their being boarded in the village or in the farm-houses throughout the commune. Although not furnished with introductions, I was politely received by Mr Vygen, the commissary

of police and “*Directeur des Aliénés*,” and by Dr Parigot, the principal physician, who holds the appointment of superintendent of the lunatics of the department of Brussels, 366 in number.

The origin of Gheel as a place of treatment for the insane is due to the following legend, which was narrated to me by a priest whom I met in the village, and who seemed to have no doubt of its authenticity. In the sixth century, Dympna, the daughter of an Irish king, fled from her country in the company of a priest who had converted her to Christianity, to escape the importunities of her own father, who had become violently enamoured of her, and who, overtaking her at Gheel, struck off her head by a single blow of his sword. Two lunatics, who happened to be witnesses of the deed, were instantly restored to reason, and from that day the murdered Dympna became a saint, and the patron of lunatics.

On the spot where the deed of blood was committed, the Church of St Dympna was erected and dedicated to her ; and, in verification of the story, there appears in a recess of the outer wall, a rude representation of the tragedy, in

which the actors are the enraged king with the devil at his elbow, and the kneeling daughter exposing her neck to the sacrifice. In the interior, over the altar, is a figure of the saint, with chained maniacs kneeling at her feet. Anciently it was the universal custom for all recently-arrived lunatics to make, for nine successive days, processions round the interior of the church three times daily, prostrating themselves on their knees each time they approached the shrine of the saint. If they were too weak or too violent to perform the ceremony themselves, intercession was made by the relatives and priests, while the patients remained chained in a chamber adjoining the church, and within hearing of the proceedings. Even in the present day, this practice is not altogether discontinued, and my clerical informant seriously assured me, that many remarkable cures are attributable to the intercession of St Dymphna. When Esquirol visited the village in 1821, a similar assurance was given him by the rector of the parish, on the ground of his own knowledge ; and there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that, in certain

cases, a strong faith in the power of the saint may have contributed to the recovery of the believer.

On Sunday I attended high mass in the church, which was crowded with lunatics and peasants, all mingling together. One woman entered with chains round her ankles, making a clanking noise as she walked up the aisle; and Dr Parigot, who accompanied me, informed me that the chains were applied in her case as a drag to restrain her wandering propensities.

The commune of Gheel has a population of 10,000 souls, of whom 1000 are lunatics. During the three days of my stay, I visited, in company with Dr P., a great number of the cottages in which the lunatics are boarded, both in the village and surrounding country. Indeed, there is scarcely a house that does not harbour one, two, or three patients, who, for the most part, are in full possession of liberty. A great proportion are employed in cultivating the soil, while some assist in household work, others tend the cows, dress the little gardens, or even nurse the children of their hosts. I saw several female luna-

tics with infants in their arms, whom they were fondly caressing.

The minimum board for each lunatic is 200 francs per annum, and it is remarkable that for so small a consideration any family should risk the disturbance of its peace by admitting an insane stranger to share its fireside. But it appears that the villagers of Gheel have a peculiar vocation for the treatment of the insane—among whom, from infancy, they have been accustomed to live. Many of the better class of houses are tidy and clean, and even those receiving the smallest rate of board are not without an air of humble comfort.

Dr P. pointed out to me several families whose female members, he said, had a remarkable tact in the management of the insane, and whom he had often known, on the sudden manifestation of a furious paroxysm, step fearlessly forward, and succeed in controlling and quieting the lunatic, when the males had thought it safest to retreat.

A committee of inspection, consisting of a physician, the commissary of police, and the burgo-master, has power to visit the cottages, to in-

quire into the treatment of the patients, and to punish instances of ill usage; which, however, according to Dr P.'s experience, are extremely rare. On the contrary, the lunatic is treated with peculiar indulgence; the snugest corner by the fireside is set apart for his chair, and he is in every respect looked upon as a member of the family.

During my walks I saw only two patients under restraint, namely, two women who were chained by the ankles, the one, as already mentioned, in the church, and the other a handsome young girl labouring under erotomania. Admitting the necessity of preventing escape, we may still regret that less questionable means than the use of iron fetters are not resorted to.

Since 1842, when the burgomaster was killed by a lunatic, no instance of any serious accident to the villagers has occurred; and within the last three years there have been only two cases of suicide. I should remark, however, that patients known to labour under strongly-marked homicidal or suicidal mania are not received at Gheel. According to Dr Parigot, cases of illicit inter-

course between the sexes are of very rare occurrence.

There are several "Estaminets" in the village, whither many of the lunatics resort to enjoy their pipe and glass of beer, and to play at billiards. Their presence nowhere excites the smallest attention. I met a man hurrying along on Sunday evening in a state of great excitement, flourishing a large cudgel above his head; but no one seemed to notice or molest him.

There are in all five physicians charged with the care of the lunatics; but with the exception of Dr P., whose salary is 4000 francs per annum, the others receive only the miserable pittance of 200 francs. I could procure no accurate statistics of the cures, deaths, &c.; but the proportion of the former is necessarily very small, as in general only cases of long standing, which have come to be considered hopeless, are sent to Gheel. Dr P. does not consider the mortality greater among the lunatics than among the sane population, and I can vouch for having seen a man of ninety, hale and strong, and a woman of eighty, both lunatics.

With respect to salubrity of situation, Gheel ranks well. The soil is light and sandy, and rain is speedily absorbed. General sanitary precautions, however, do not seem much attended to, for the village is in a very neglected state as to cleanliness; the principal street having a puddle of dirty water bordering its whole length on both sides. From the absence of mountain or hill, the aspect of the country is monotonous, and must be very bleak in the winter.

So far as I know, there is no establishment similar to Gheel in Europe. It undoubtedly possesses several advantages, and is capable of teaching us some important lessons. Of these the foremost lies in the fact that the insane may live in the enjoyment of almost unrestricted liberty, not only with little danger to the community which harbours them, but even as useful members of that community. How much misery might the due appreciation of this truth have saved the unfortunate lunatics of Europe during the last forty years! Cooped up within their dungeon walls, how many have dragged out a miserable existence un-

cheered by the glorious light of day and the fresh breezes of heaven !

Gheel has also this great advantage, that the self-respect of the lunatic is not wounded by an array of guards and prison walls. He feels himself a free man, and instead of being cut off from society, he mingles with his more fortunate fellow-men. Nor is this liberty frequently abused, only six or seven attempts at escape having been made during the past year.

M. Vygen is in the habit of receiving insane patients of the upper class as boarders in his family, and had lately a British officer residing with him in this capacity. His rate of board is from 1000 to 1500 francs.

It was remarked of the celebrated Dr Willis, that he was more successful in the cure of foreign than of English patients, and his success was attributed to the more complete change of scenes and impressions, in the case of foreigners. On a like principle, English invalids might derive advantage from being sent to Gheel.

Dr Parigot, also, is making arrangements to receive boarders of the upper class, either native

or foreign ; and I am sure that at his hands they would meet with kind and skilful treatment.

But although Gheel, as we have seen, possesses many advantages, it labours under one drawback of so serious a nature as to render it unfit for the successful treatment of recent insanity : I allude to the want of a central asylum or hospital, where cases requiring special treatment and surveillance might be assembled under the immediate eye of the physician. Without such means it is impossible to treat with adequate care cases of acute mania and other forms of disease requiring constant attention. Without it, no accurate register of the progress of the malady can be ~~per-~~^{per-}formed,—no “ post mortem ” examinations be performed,—no cleanliness ensured in the case of paralytics, who have lost control over the sphincters. Finally, the use of one of the most effectual and soothing methods of cure, viz., the warm-bath, becomes impossible without the conveniences that can be combined only in an hospital.

Dr P. is quite sensible of the importance of such an adjuvant, and is in strong hopes that the Government will soon erect a suitable building.

There can be no doubt, that the establishment of such an hospital would greatly add to the efficiency of Gheel, and render it, perhaps, the model institution of Europe, by thus combining proper medical treatment with the utmost possible degree of personal liberty.

In concluding these brief and desultory notes, I have merely to add, that whatever ideas of spiritualism may prevail among a certain class of physicians in Germany—such as those of the school of Heinroth, who acknowledge no necessary connection between insanity and the condition of the brain—I found in my own experience, no extravagances either of theory or of practice. There, as in England, it is universally admitted that mental derangement is due to disordered action of the nervous system, and more particularly of the cerebral hemispheres, as the portion immediately connected with the intellectual and moral functions.

The treatment, with few exceptions, is founded on rational principles, and is not swayed by fanciful theories.

Indeed, in one respect, the asylums of Germany possess advantages over those of England, as, for example, in the greater number of resident physicians. Thus, while Hanwell, with its 1000 lunatics has only two physicians resident in the asylum, Siegburg, with its 200 patients, has four medical officers; and Sonnenstein and Leubus, containing respectively 240 and 146 lunatics, have each three physicians. It is impossible that any one man can render himself so thoroughly conversant with the mental condition of 500 patients as to be able adequately to direct their psychical treatment.

Much, undoubtedly, has of late years been done, in England, to improve the physical accommodations of the insane; but the welfare of this afflicted class would be still further promoted by increasing the number of resident physicians, and by raising the standard of the attendants, so that these might be made intelligent and moral companions of the unfortunate beings committed to their care.









